

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

AUSTIN, Tex., April 16.—Following is the Governor's message as read before the two Houses of the Legislature today:

The Surplus Can Be Remitted to the People Without Making a Change in the Present Tax Rates.

Close Estimate of the Amount Necessary to Run the State Over the Next Months. Economy Urged.

A BATH PAPER.

Special to the Gazette.

AUSTIN, Tex., April 16.—Following is the Governor's message as read before the two Houses of the Legislature today: Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives: In convening you upon this extraordinary occasion, I welcome you to the capitol with a cordial greeting, bidding those who for the time being are charged with the law-making power of a great commonwealth, that in a few short years have struggled with a wilderness to the high plane of unchallenged supremacy in financial standing, as the only state in the Union, while imposing but a nominal state tax, as found it necessary because of its vast resources to convince its lawmakers to deal with a treasury filled to the brim.

And you are called upon to consider other subjects of the most fundamental character and of the deepest significance, I desire to respectfully impress upon your minds my solemn convictions that the conclusions to be reached are of vast importance in guiding the destiny of our state, and that our material interests for years are inseparably bound up with the legislation now to follow. If ever there was a time in the history of our state when careful deliberation, sound business sense, and freedom from passion or local jealousies ought to prevail, that time is now.

Transacting by harmonious, intelligent and patriotic efforts in the discharge of these important and arduous duties, your labors may eventually for the public good, and believing that a favorable solution of many of the attendant difficulties is attainable, and if reached by you the people of your state will not withhold their applause or lasting gratitude.

I have the honor to invite your attention to the fact that there can be no question brought before you as the representatives of the people, of more consequence, or of deeper concern, than that relating to finance and the monetary affairs of the state.

It is a proposition that affects every individual, and reaches to the very foundation of society. Taxation, therefore, is one of the most important powers to be exercised by any government, and there is scarcely anything about which the citizen becomes so re-live, and it should be most cautiously guarded by a free people, as well as by the framers and ex-actors of the law.

It is conceded too as a cardinal principle that no more revenue ought to be collected from the people than the amount necessary to defray the expenses of a wise, economical and efficient administration, because an unnecessary surplus in the Treasury not only impoverishes the people, and places the hand that must be dependent upon to utilize and develop our material resources, but it gives birth to extravagant legislation; produces wild schemes of waste and profuse expenditures; and begets legislative expedients to obtain public money, which too frequently corrupts the purity of the public officials and causes the character of the government to lose its charm with the masses.

On the other hand, while no man can be more heartily in favor of a wise economy in expenditures than myself, and any effort in that direction will always have my earnest co-operation and approval, I feel it my duty to urge upon your honorable bodies that while directing your attention to the enforcement of the most rigid economy, you should not be unmindful of the fact that the several departments of the government can only do their best with the means at their disposal, and cannot anticipate an appropriation save to a limited extent defied in the constitution, without violating the law, no matter what the exigencies may be.

As every prudent business man knows that the principle of paying as you go is more in consonance with a wise economy than to promise payment at a future time, it becomes imperative beyond the possibility of a mistake, that you should not hesitate or refuse to place the necessary means at their disposal with which to carry on the affairs of the government successfully without having to come to subsequent legislatures with deficiencies.

Great as this question of taxation is, and vital as it must be to the future destinies of our state, yet after all it is not the present state tax of 25 cents upon the \$100 of property that is proving so onerous to taxpayers. And in looking to remedy that you should bear in mind that it is not the rock which stands out boldly giving warning to the mariner of danger, against which the ship is wrecked.

So in government it is not that which the people are not understood, which undermines the property of the state and depletes its treasury, but the secret leaks; the insidious and unseen advance of extravagance hidden away in the complications of your state, county and municipal governments, so as not to be visible to the public eye.

And lawmakers should not exhaust their spasms of reform at each recurring session, by going in to the several state departments and cutting down the salaries of a few clerks, and while squabbling over the amount of the reduction spending in per diem and other contingent expenses attending their work, far more than the sum saved amounts to. The people want a government as economical as an efficient government can be made, but they do not desire that efficiency in any sense shall be sacrificed to a mistaken idea of economy, which saves a dime on one hand, and squanders hundreds of dollars on the other hand.

The wise reform measures enacted by you at the regular session which were designed to stimulate revenue officers to increased diligence in the collection and prompt remission of the public money, and which at first seemed onerous to collectors and others affected by them, giving rise to some remonstrance and complaint, were nevertheless fruitful with the most satisfactory results marking an era of radical financial reform, a partial measure of which is at-

tested by the plethoric condition of your state treasury. Had you done nothing else worthy of commendation, this would eminently entitle you to the gratitude of the people.

I may also add my congratulations that there is no longer a complaint that the public money is lodged and held in banks before reaching its final destination. And the highly satisfactory financial condition set forth in the comprehensive and exhaustive report of the Comptroller of public accounts exhibits the proof, not alone of what has been accomplished thus far by the efficiency of collectors making the closest collections ever recorded, and the prosecution of delinquents by the Attorney-General's department, conducted with a vigor and fearlessness to be commended, but suggests the possibilities awaiting us in a fuller development of perfection of these reform measures.

And I suggest for your consideration, as a meritorious and proper subject of legislation, the better enforcement of the constitutional requirement that taxes shall be assessed by uniform and just rules, so that the public burden shall rest with equal weight upon all men with respect to the valuation of property for the purposes of taxation. The constitution clearly demands that property shall be taxed at its true value; yet it is a notorious fact that so far as real estate is concerned, this provision of law is almost universally disregarded, and the low and varying valuation brings a when and unequal rate of taxes, to the detriment of the small property holders whose possessions are generally assessed nearer their true value for the purpose of sale or exchange.

In this connection, your special attention is called to the report of the Comptroller where mention is made of the large amount of money in banks escaping taxation, and it may be added, in some instances for corporations and individuals residing outside of the state.

And since your adjournment it has come to my knowledge that large stocks of merchandise have been brought into the state after the first of January, and in a few months the firms broke, and the goods were absorbed by creditors, and no taxes could be collected.

For the correction of these evils I respectfully suggest the suggestions of my former message. These vast interests require nothing to the support of our government, and yet they go into our courts and enforce their claims at the expense of the honest taxpayer, who are taxed unduly to supply the machinery of government for their behoof and benefit; and, in some instances, men thus evading the law have their children educated at the public schools, for the maintenance of which the poor man's small income and hard earnings are taxed.

While we should gladly welcome the investment of capital to aid our citizens and further our industries, those who avail themselves of the facilities of our laws should be forced

TO COMPLY WITH THEIR REQUIREMENTS.

When my honorable predecessor, who had administered the affairs of our state government for four years with such fidelity to its interests and marked and lasting credit to himself, retired from the cares of office, and I was inducted into the executive chair, there was a revenue balance in the treasury of \$479,704.32, but against that there was a deficiency to be provided for, amounting to \$295,775.52, which reduced this surplus to \$183,928.80. And the financial outlook was anything but cheering when I realized that the following demands upon the treasury would have to be speedily met: First, \$148,000 for the current monthly operating expenses of the government, due in fifteen days; \$102,794 for the necessary expenses of the Legislature, and \$100,000 which you wisely determined to appropriate for the immediate relief of our unfortunate fellow-citizens of the drought district.

To add \$18,000 for a special election to test the sense of the people on the adoption or rejection of the constitutional amendments to be submitted; \$50,000 for the establishment of a deaf and dumb asylum for the colored people, and \$50,000 for a reformatory. And the embarrassment to my mind was greatly increased by your honorable bodies enacting a law to suspend the forced collection of taxes, which would have practically reduced revenue receipts to a minimum for at least four or six months.

In view of this condition of our finances, while honoring the purity of your motives and deeply sympathizing with the people in their monetary stringency, I felt impelled by a sense of duty to interpose my vote, believing it obvious that the intended relief would ultimately prove a disappointment to taxpayers by doubling their obligations at a time when their ability for payment would not be increased by the delay, and in the meantime

A TEMPORARY DEFICIENCY. Injurious to the financial standing of the state would be inevitable. If, therefore, it has happened that the present administration, without an increase in the pre-existing rate of taxation, has been enabled largely through the efficiency of your wise legislation to meet these current and extraordinary expenditures, and at this time leave an unexpended cash balance in the Treasury to the credit of the revenue account of \$1,500,000, exclusive of the net indemnity claim recently received from the general government, amounting to \$222,541.53, making a grand total of \$2,422,541.52, it would seem to justify the claim that we have not only been reasonably economical in handling the public funds, but the interests of the state have been protected with care and fidelity. And the question of all questions that the people are asking to-day is: What disposition shall be made by you of this unnecessary surplus? In consideration of the numerous requests and recommendations looking to the expenditure of this public money, under very liberal and latitudinarian interpretations designed to convert the Legislature into a clearing house for the indirect accomplishment of what the constitution forbids in a direct manner, by its appropriation for local or private enterprises, I trust you may receive the inspiration of a comprehensive wisdom and prudence exalted above selfishness, so that the greatest good may be realized to the largest number, and that you will be governed by a sense of justice, rather than generosity, in the disposition of this money belonging to the tax-payers of the state. It had better be left in the treasury than be squandered.

It is essential before legislating upon this subject, that there should be a careful collation of facts. And in order that you may be fully advised of the financial condition of the state I refer you to the report of the Comptroller, which is REPLENISH WITH VALUABLE INFORMATION.

With no purpose or desire to direct a matter about which you have the exclusive right of action, and of which you can

best judge as the immediate representatives of your respective constituencies, yet may I venture to suggest that my own view about the proper disposition of the cash surplus in the Treasury is, first, to see that the people from whom it was derived in the shape of taxes, shall be made the direct beneficiaries of a liberal share of it. And this brings up for consideration a very serious and delicate question. If we were simply required to determine from the estimated taxable values of the state what rate of taxation should be maintained to produce a revenue sufficient to meet the ascertained operating expense, based upon necessary current expenditures and outstanding appropriations, the proposition would be of easy solution; but there are other material factors to be taken into account.

Our state is in a formative condition. Its property values are fluctuating and subject to serious disasters. And, in addition to this, the receipts derived from taxation are not uniform during the year. The great bulk of it reaches the Treasury in December and January, and for full one-half of the year the expenditures exceed the receipts. So that to prevent a temporary embarrassment and enable the Treasury to meet the lawful demands upon it, you must provide a sufficient margin to tide the government over these months. This is the dictate of business prudence, and the best statesmanship is but the most thorough common sense in the affairs of ordinary life, enlarged and applied to the business of the state.

Besides, as the county and municipal levies for ad-valorem taxes are controlled by the rate of the state levy, and it is presumed that they only levy such amount as will be actually necessary to conduct the affairs of their county, city or town, it follows that a reduction in the state tax would tend to their serious embarrassment. Now by reference to the Comptroller's statement in answer to my inquiry on that subject, it will be observed that his estimate of

A SAFE MARGIN. To meet this contingency is \$300,000, and his estimate of receipts from 1887 taxes for the current year, as against appropriations now in force, show an excess in receipts over disbursements, exclusive of the balance on hand at the beginning of the fiscal year of only \$298,659.53.

To this we might possibly add the sum of whatever collections might be made from back taxes. But financial estimates must be based upon the solid data of ascertained facts. The imagination is a poor financier, and wholly without thrift or reliability. As this certain amount of money is indispensable to the existence of the government, the pertinent inquiry arises—how then shall we extend relief to the taxpayers without a reduction of the present tax rate to such an extent as would afford any appreciable benefit, and without, at the same time, depleting the receipts below the requisite margin above necessary to enable the treasury at all times to meet the just demands upon it.

To this end I respectfully offer the following suggestions for your consideration: Leave the rate of taxation as it now is, and as the total ad-valorem tax amounts to \$1,626,103.21 you might set apart one-tenth of this amount in the Treasury from the cash surplus, and directly by enactment, the remission of that proportion of the ad-valorem tax of each taxpayer when collections are made, commencing with September next. By this means a distribution of this, or such other proportion of the surplus as you deem just and wise, can be made to the whole people, who are best entitled to your favorable consideration in a disposal of this money, and by leaving this sum in the Treasury to the credit of the revenue account, you simply anticipate the collections to that extent, save the state from the cost of its collection and take no risk of impairing its ability to operate upon.

A CASH PAYING BASIS.

This, of course, may be considered a hardship upon collectors, or it would deprive them of that proper portion of the legitimate fees which they would otherwise receive, unless you see proper to protect them by a consideration of their claims.

If by the time the Twenty-first Legislature assembles it should be ascertained that there was still a surplus by reason of the tax rate being too high, they could again remit the surplus to the people, and then more advisedly adjust the tax levy to suit the requirements of the case. And the only loss to be sustained by the taxpayers would result from the loss of the interest on the excess, if any, not required for the current expenses of the government. This would be too small to each citizen to be deemed objectionable.

In support of the advisability of this suggestion, I call your attention to the fact that there will be a deficiency in the standing appropriations for the judiciary department, quarantine and other demands, estimated by the Comptroller to be \$150,000.

And the following bonds will become due as follows: \$200,000, 6 per cent, mature 1890; \$467,000, 7 per cent, mature 1891; \$65,000, 6 per cent, mature 1891, and no sinking fund has been created to meet them.

Four hundred and eighty-three thousand, five hundred dollars of these bonds belong to the public schools, university and the several asylums.

I question the wisdom of paying these latter bonds at their maturity. In view of the fact that they belong to these special funds and as it is difficult to obtain a safe investment the money would probably remain for a time idle in the treasury, with a consequent loss of interest which would fall upon the people in the end. But \$261,000 of them are drawing 7 per cent interest, paid by the state, while it only receives 6 per cent. from the counties. If not in contravention of the constitution they should be taken up at maturity and a manuscript 6 per cent. bond issued for the whole amount to equalize the rate of interest, and obviate any possible objection from those who pay the difference and are in a measure unfriendly to the public school system.

But \$278,400.00 of the bonds outstanding and soon to fall due belong to private parties and must be paid at maturity.

If therefore you do not disturb the present rate of taxation, we may safely calculate upon the excess of receipts over disbursements to supply the government with the necessary funds to meet its obligations to these private creditors, and this will leave the surplus

THE PRESENT SURPLUS. In the treasury, less the amount remitted to the taxpayers, to be disposed of in the payment of existing deficiencies on revenue account heretofore mentioned; adjust the state indebtedness to the university; increase the accommodations and efficiency of the asylums to the extent deemed advisable; make the necessary additional appropriation to put the reformatory into speedy operation and maintain the inmates whom the law directs to be transferred from the penitentiaries to this institution; provide for an adequate geological survey of the state; furnish the capitol, spend a small portion at least to our state militia upon a firm basis; and for the erection of a modest monumental shaft at the capitol, to be as durable as the pyramids, in perpetuation of the self-sacrificing valor and heroism of our Texas, Mexican war and Confederate veterans, as such other meritorious claims as may commend themselves to your favorable consideration, and finally but by no means the least worthy of attention, may be mentioned for suitable recognition the just demands of our public school teachers. The probable excess of amount apportioned over receipts of available school fund on the first day of September, 1888, is believed to be \$250,000.

In times past it has been the custom when the state became embarrassed for lack of revenue to supply current expenses, to appropriate with lavish hand such portion of the school fund as might be necessary to subserve its immediate demands, and to meet the existing exigency, and now that the school fund is short and this public interest is temporarily crippled, there can be alleged no good reason why the general revenue fund should not reciprocate the compliment from its superabundance.

This may be readily accomplished by transferring as a loan from the revenue account to the school fund the amount of the existing deficiency for services of teachers. SUPERINTENDENT COOPER'S REPORT. In order that you may have a proper understanding of the subject I invite your careful attention to the elaborate report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, which embraces the following complete exposition and examination of the educational affairs of the state both as relates to teachers, scholars, property, amount and sources of revenue:

I have the honor to submit herewith the following information in response to your request of recent date. The amount of school funds apportioned to the public schools for the school year 1887-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1888-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1889-90, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1890-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1891-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1892-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1893-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1894-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1895-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1896-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1897-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1898-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1899-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1900-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1901-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1902-3, was \$1,362,236.00. 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The amount for the year 1922-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1923-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1924-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1925-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1926-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1927-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1928-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1929-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1930-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1931-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1932-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1933-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1934-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1935-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1936-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1937-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1938-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1939-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 1940-1, was \$1,362,236.00. 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The amount for the year 2017-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2018-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2019-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2020-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2021-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2022-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2023-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2024-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2025-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2026-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2027-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2028-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2029-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2030-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2031-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2032-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2033-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2034-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2035-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2036-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2037-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2038-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2039-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2040-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2041-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2042-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2043-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2044-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2045-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2046-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2047-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2048-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2049-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2050-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2051-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2052-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2053-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2054-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2055-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2056-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2057-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2058-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2059-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2060-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2061-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2062-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2063-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2064-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2065-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2066-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2067-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2068-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2069-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2070-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2071-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2072-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2073-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2074-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2075-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2076-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2077-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2078-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2079-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2080-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2081-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2082-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2083-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2084-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2085-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2086-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2087-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2088-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2089-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2090-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2091-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2092-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2093-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2094-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2095-6, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2096-7, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2097-8, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2098-9, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2099-0, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2100-1, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2101-2, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2102-3, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2103-4, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2104-5, was \$1,362,236.00. The amount for the year 2105-6, was \$1,